September 2012

GARDEN NOTES

PAVING THE WAY FOR OUR GARDEN

There are lots of exciting things happening in the garden over the coming months.

With planning under way for Jazz in the gardens we are keen to complete a few projects by November. A working bee to pave the garden was held on 24 and 25 August and we achieved a phenomenal amount! Pop down and have a look at the transformation.

Planning is also underway to deck the outdoor classroom and complete the sculptural curvy fence. We are really excited about the growing number of classes getting into the garden and using it as a resource for a range of subjects. This is happening mostly when there is a parent/s who are willing to assist so if you are interested in getting involved do let us know.

The garden is a beautiful resource for the whole community and it is a talking point for many locals, even those without children at the school. We have been very lucky to have a dedicated and skilled committee and a fantastic, hardworking group of parents volunteering. Thanks to everyone for their interest and contributions we already have a beautiful garden and over the coming months hope to complete more of our planned projects for garden design and infrastructure.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Email us at ashburycommunitygarden@gmail.com to join our email list or send a note to school for ‘Ashbury Community Garden’.

DIARY DATES

WED 5 SEPTEMBER
7PM
COMMITTEE MEETING

FRI IN SEPTEMBER
(DATE TO BE ADVISED)
8.30-9.30 AM
MARKET STALL

SAT 22 SEPTEMBER
12-4PM
NEXT WORKING BEE

SUN 4 NOVEMBER
Jazz in the Garden
Ashbury Public School

Enjoy the dulcet tones of Ashbury Public School Jazz Band with our community. We will be selling food to raise funds for the garden.

SINCERE THANKS TO...

We would like to thank the NSW government for the "Building Communities" Grant and Canterbury Council for their ClubGrants which have helped us build accessible pathways and an outdoor classroom.
CHEEKY CHOOK CLUB!

Our wonderful girls have settled well over the winter, so much so that they are still laying 2-4 eggs a day! Winter is traditionally a time when most chooks "go into moult" - they go on egg strike, replace most of their feathers, and generally look dishevelled. For some reason our chooks forgot to moult this winter.

Each term we change the chook roster bringing four new families on board to help us raise the chooks. Volunteers are needed for Term 4 for four shifts - mornings only on Sundays, Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. No experience necessary!

Each shift requires you to: top up the food mash; change the water; feed any scraps you bring to school; and help at least one working bee during the term to clean out the chook shed. All that in return for taking home whatever eggs are laid on your rostered day. A great experience for your family.

Please contact us at ashburycommunitygarden@gmail.com if you want to join the CHEEKY CHOOK CLUB for Term 4. The Monday shift in Term 4 is already filled by Grace's family (Year 4). Three new families wanted!

HOW YOU CAN HELP

PURCHASE our fresh, local, organic, in season produce at our Market Stall, held at Ashbury Public School each term.

TEACH children and teachers about our garden by volunteering an hour or so when you can. Don’t worry, we’ll train you first!

DONATE food scraps including vegetables (no onions), fruit and bread to feed to the chickens.

GET BUSY in the garden. There is always something you can do to help, such as weeding, watering or working bees. Feeding our chooks is a favourite for many families!

CONTACT US to find out more!

IN THE GARDEN

Spring is on the way again, the most exciting time of the gardening year!

Last minute pruning of deciduous stone fruits (e.g. peaches, cherries) will provide stems covered in blossom for the vase.

Citrus trees, already bursting with growth, will be grateful for a good, deep watering following the dry late winter.

Respond to sap-sucking insects with diluted vegetable oil and soap, a cheaper alternative to commercial white-oils that can be used in temperatures under 30 degrees.

Seeds for summer crops like solanaceae (e.g. tomatoes, eggplants) and cucurbits (i.e. melons, zucchini) can be given a head-start under clear plastic or glass.

A spring clean is always rewarding, clearing away diseased leaves, mulching against the impending heat, and setting the stage for new life.
**KIDS IN THE GARDEN**

This year the environmental officers have been composting. Each week two different classes have a go. Sometimes it can be smelly! There are lot of bananas peels, apples cores and paper in the compost. It is better to put your banana peels, apple cores and paper in the compost so it doesn’t go to landfill.

Remember to put your scraps in your class ice cream container.

*By Environmental Officers Alexander S and Katherine L, 3M*

**MARKET STALLS**

Our market stalls are a great opportunity to buy some delicious fresh organic produce and perhaps discover how you and your family could contribute to this wonderful ongoing project.

**Watch out for news** of our next Market Stall which will be held on a Friday morning from 8.30-9.30am in the garden.

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**PARENTS IN THE GARDEN**

Shirley Huang and Loan Doan are very keen gardeners and valued volunteers who weed and water the garden and look after the chickens.

Last week they took a class into the garden to plant some seeds, taste some peas and tomatoes and feed and pat the chooks.

“The kids really loved it” Loan said “It is really wonderful to take them out and show them what is growing.” Loan and Shirley supported one another to take the kids into the garden and asked for advice from parents who have taken classes before.

“I just wanted a few ideas and to know what jobs needed to be done so I could get the kids involved”.

Anyone who has an hour free to do this from time to time should give it a go. It is such a nice thing to do and it is really not very hard. It means our kids get to understand how food is grown and to appreciate nature and the environment.

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**NEW ZEALAND SPINACH**

New Zealand Spinach or Warragul greens is a robust trailing perennial native to Australia. It is slow to bolt, drought tolerant grows quickly and is fairly tasty. A great ground cover and once you have it in the garden you will never be without ingredients for a spinach pie or spinach fritters. See recipe below.

**SPINACH FRITTERS**

1 cup of diced blanched and squeezed spinach (see ‘how to prepare’)

1 cup of plain flour

1 teaspoon of baking powder

½ cup grated parmesan (you could substitute with feta or use both)

1 finely chopped onion

1 cup of finely chopped herbs (basil, parsley, oregano, chives, dill or a combination)

1 egg

¾ cup milk

Freshly ground black pepper

1 cup vegetable oil

**METHOD**

Mix flour, baking powder, egg and milk into a thick batter.

Add all other ingredients and mix completely.

Heat oil in frypan.

Scoop soup spoonfuls of fritter batter into hot oil until crisp and cooked through (a few minutes on each side).

If oil starts to smoke or fritters are browning too quickly adjust the heat. Serve hot.

*This recipe is available on the Ashbury Community Garden page of the Ashbury Public School website, www.ashbury-p.schools.nsw.edu.au*

**HOW TO PREPARE**

Pick or cut the leaves off the stems.

Discard the stems.

Wash the leaves.

Bring a pot of water to the boil.

Add the washed leaves and blanch for a minute.

Drain and rinse the leaves in cold water, then squeeze out as much moisture as possible.

Chop finely.

*This can be used in place of spinach or silver beet in many recipes including spinach pie.*